Hydration toolbox talk

29 CFR 1926.51, 1910.141, 1926.21

Date _____ Trainer _____ Location _____

Opening question

How much water have you had since you got to the job this morning?

Why it matters

Your body loses water all day through sweat and breathing, even when you do not notice it. When you fall behind, you get tired, dizzy and slow, and a tired, dizzy worker is more likely to slip, fall or make a mistake with a tool. In hot weather, dehydration also raises the risk of serious heat illness.

Key points

1. **Know the drinking water rules**
   In construction, an adequate supply of potable water must be provided at every workplace. Potable means safe to drink. General industry employers must also provide potable water at permanent workplaces (29 CFR 1910.141(b)(1)(i)). If the cooler is empty or the water looks or smells off, tell your foreman right away.
   29 CFR 1926.51(a)(1)

2. **Drink before you feel thirsty**
   Thirst can lag behind what your body needs, so do not wait for it. Drink small amounts often through the shift instead of a lot at once at lunch. More is not always better: drinking a very large amount of plain water in a short time can also make you sick.

3. **Know the signs of dehydration**
   Watch for thirst, dark urine, headache, dizziness, tiredness and muscle cramps. Confusion, fainting or strange behavior in the heat can mean a heat emergency. Do not leave that worker alone, and get help right away.

4. **Keep the water clean**
   Portable drinking water containers must close tightly and have a tap, and nobody dips a cup or bottle into the cooler. Do not share cups. Use single-use cups or your own bottle, and keep the cooler out of dirty or dusty areas.
   29 CFR 1926.51(a)(2)

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5 **Only drink water you know is safe**

Nonpotable water, such as water for industrial or firefighting use, is not safe to drink, and its outlets must be marked with signs saying so. Do not drink from hoses, tanks or taps unless you know the water is potable. Never eat or drink in areas exposed to toxic materials.

29 CFR 1926.51(b)(1)

6 **Make water breaks part of the work**

Put water close to where people are working, not just at the trailer. Keep coolers in the shade and refill them before they run dry. Take breaks during the hottest and hardest work, and check on new workers who are not used to the conditions.

Scenario

Picture this: it is the first hot week of the season. A worker skips breakfast, drinks a large coffee and works all morning without water because the cooler is back at the trailer. By early afternoon they have a pounding headache and feel dizzy on a ladder, but they keep going so they do not slow the crew down. What should the worker, the crew and the foreman do differently?

Crew discussion

1. Where is the closest drinking water to where we are working today?
2. What signs would tell you a coworker is getting into trouble?
3. How can we make water breaks part of the job instead of something people skip?
4. Who refills the coolers, and what do we do if they run dry?

Bottom line **Drink water early and often, keep it clean and close to the work, and speak up when you or a coworker starts showing signs.**

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Sign-in sheet / Hoja de asistencia

Topic / Tema Hydration / Hidratación

Date / Fecha

Trainer / Instructor

Location / Lugar

Company / Empresa

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